

# What is Ecosystem Management?



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You've probably heard and read the term Ecosystem Management in some of our master planning information recently. What does this really mean and what difference does it make to our master planning for Governor Thompson State Park and the Peshtigo River State Forest? In our recent work on Vision and Goals for these two properties, phrases like "...within the capabilities of the site..." and "...consistent with the ecological capabilities of the land..." have been used a lot. These words seem to describe some kind of harmony with the natural resources of the land we're dealing with.

Harmony is a major concept when talking about ecosystem management. Wisconsin is a state with a many different landscape types and these types have a pattern to them, depending on what type of bedrock, soil, slope, vegetation and water features are present. These factors all work together to give a particular landscape its unique characteristics.

The most basic guiding principle of ecosystem management is this: "*Everything is connected.*" Ecologically, socially, and economically. How, then, does this apply to our master plans? The various landscapes of Wisconsin have been studied and classified as to their Ecological Landscape type. The part of Marinette County in which these properties are located is known as the *Northeast Sands*. Examples of other Ecological Landscapes are Southeast Glacial Plains, North Central Forest and Western Prairie. There are sixteen types altogether in Wisconsin.

Master planning for any property should harmonize with the ecological landscape in which it is located. When considering the various management alternatives for the property we review the characteristics of the ecological, social and economic landscape and evaluate the opportunities and resources available. We attempt to determine if the actions we are proposing will help maintain and restore the communities of the region. If our actions are in harmony with the local ecosystem, they will protect or improve the functioning of that system. Ecosystem management is a method of decision-making that considers the consequences of our proposed actions on the land, society and the economy.



Winter -Governor Thompson State Park

**Don't Forget! We are also on the WEB!** For current information and newsletters regarding Gov. Thompson State Park, the Peshtigo River State Forest, and the latest DNR headlines please visit: [www.dnr.state/master\\_planning](http://www.dnr.state/master_planning).

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